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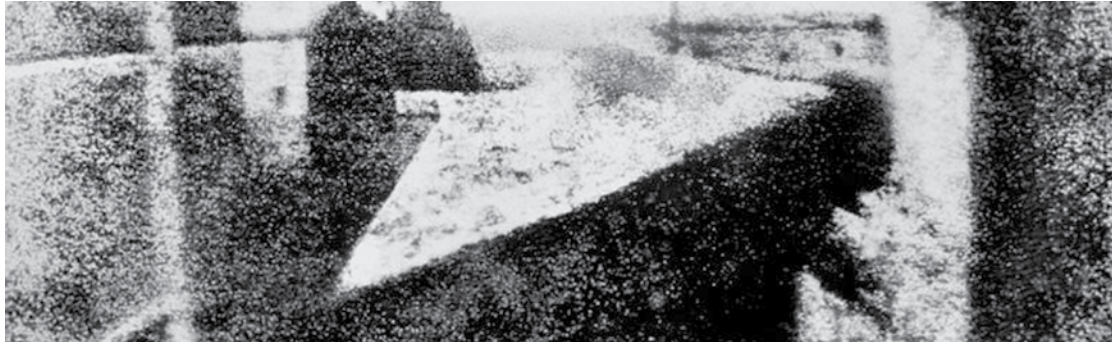
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this issue

DECEMBER



ART, page 6

The Window at Le Gras



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JAN. 9, 2009

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LETTER FROM THE OVERLORD

FEEL FREE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY

2009 IS HERE. Frankly, I am scared. By the time this goes to print, the violence in the Middle East, particularly the massacre in Gaza that took place 2 days ago, could have potentially spread very far. Everyone says the economy will keep getting worse. People keep losing jobs. And so on. So, it's hard to be optimistic. But I keep hope in the possibility that the slow-dissolve from the top can yield benefits for the 'underground-economy'. I encourage anyone reading this to keep selling music out of their trunks, producing outsider art, putting on local shows, screen printing, cutting hair, selling marijuana (no hard drugs please), bar-backing, and whatever it takes to keep tax-free cash in your pocket. Out of these hard times can arise great movements, scenes, and ultimately a stronger community. Let's face it: people are broke. I know I am. That works for me cause I am fat. But some of you kids are way too skinny to survive an impending and upgraded Great Depression 2.0 we could possibly see. I can't wear skinny jeans but I got enough visceral belly fat to last me through a depression or at least a few recessions. That's why I keep buying 5-dollar pizzas and 12 tamales for 6 bux when I am out drinking. It has nothing to do with a lack of judgment when I am drinking.

ON THE COVER:
This Worst of Collage is an amalgamation of work between FPH staffers Shelby Hohl and Tim Dorsey. We always love to scum it up for our Worst of Houston Issue but the kids did us well this go round with this French-fry deluxe piece of art.



+



= ❤️

DEBRIS

Practice and Performance

| Buffalo Sean

WHAT IS 2009? IS IT JUST BACK IN OH-NINE? CAN THIS YEAR BE CONTENT TO SIT AMONG OTHER MONETARY UNITS, EQUAL IN MEASURE AND ONLY SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT IN LENGTH?

NO, I THINK NOT. The first year of Obama's presidency, thirty years after the first *Star Trek*, twenty-five since the first Video Music Awards and the first Mac, a decade since Napster and three months after Hurricane Ike, 2009 will not be simple, plain or average. We're sifting through the stuff that will wallpaper the rest of the century. No one's gonna remember T.I. or James Franco but something will get through. Hell, it might be you. Like previous booms of printing presses, recording studios and film companies we're sitting in the midst of an explosion of written material and social interaction that will shape the world into something that would've been unrecognizable in the 20th century.

Alison de Lima Greene, curator of contemporary art at the Museum of Fine Arts, recently compared Houston to Paris in the 19th century and New York in the 1940s and 50s. Her bombast seems over the top on the surface, but while considering unrecognizable things it seems only apt to entertain the notion. Her comparison hinged on transplants, expats, making the difference in cultural creativity. She has that right- there are over a hundred languages being spoken in this city, and Houston has absorbed nearly 25% growth in the past decade. Unfortunately for all the potential, the metaphor lacks a cultural capital's presence in popular culture, novels romanticizing the charm and energy, the crime and heartbreak

of an urban area that sets it apart from all the others. You can only watch Rushmore and Reality Bites so many times, you know. I just hope we have some fucking trains around here soon.

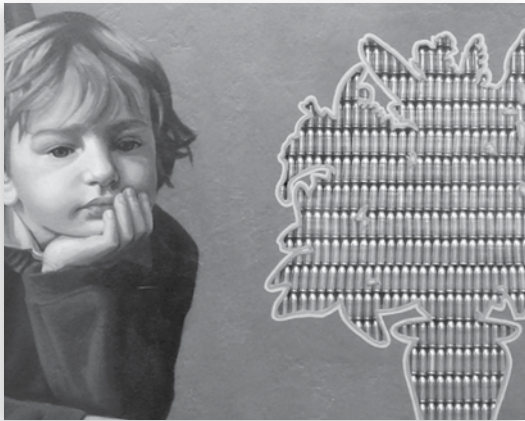
Between repeat viewings of VHS tapes from the 90s, there is a lot to look forward to in 2009. To take your mind off of people being interminable optimists (or pessimists, there are a lot of them) go out and see an art show. Don't just wipe your brow that Houston home prices never bit the big one because they weren't high to begin with, be thankful that the artworld won't suffer 'cause we never had cash on hand anyway. In January, The Center for Land Use Interpretation (sounds like science but it's really not) will lay out their big treatise on

what Texas does at Blaffer Gallery. "Texas Oil: Landscape of an Industry" maps and attempts to explain the big business of black gold from El Paso to the Ship Channel and Baytown. The Art Institute will open a new campus in the spring, Jennifer Ward curates an exhibit of artists and online communities at Fotofest and Mike Jones is coming out with a line of cognac. The Art Guys (they're planning on marrying a tree this summer) and others will open "No Zoning: Houston Artists Engaging the City" in May. We can survive a thousand foreclosures a month, and we can still make art if no one buys it. Hell, I just got laid off by Glasstire.com yesterday, and I'm not stopping for anyone. Damn the bastards. We've got shit to do.

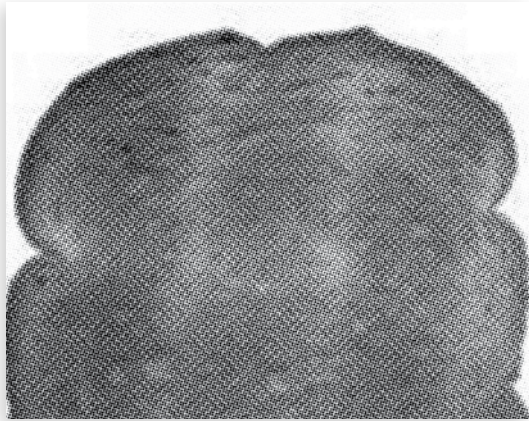
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ART SHOWS THIS MONTH

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BEST OF 08 AIN'T AS GOOD AS 07

📍 | Michael Bergeron

THE AVERAGE PERSON SEES FIVE TO SEVEN FILMS A YEAR, BUT CHANCES ARE THAT PEOPLE READING THIS ARTICLE ARE ABOVE AVERAGE FILM-GOERS.

FILM MAVENS CAN ALWAYS MUS-TER ENTHUSIASM for a year that delivers movies as diverse as Wall-E and The Dark Knight as well as more iconoclastic choices like Steven Soderbergh's four-hour Che, or British director Steve McQueen's amazing feature about imprisoned Irish Republican Army hunger striker Bobby Sands, Hunger. There's even the first-ever animated feature from Israel, Waltz With Bashir.

How odd is it that Tell No One a French film from 2006 grossed right around \$6-mil-lion and it's considered the most successful foreign film domestically released in 2008 whereas The Dark Knight has topped \$530-million and is not only the year's most successful film, but the second highest grossing film ever behind Titanic. Obviously there's no relation between quality and the amount of money a film makes.

As good as some of those films are 2008 pales with 2007 a year that saw bona fide classics like There Will Be Blood and No Country For Old Men, not to mention more

esoteric pleasures like The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford.

That said, my top ten list for 2008 unwinds as follows:

1. Man on Wire
2. Tell No One
3. Slumdog Millionaire
4. Miracle at St. Anna
5. Ghost Town
6. Revolutionary Road
7. The Wrestler
8. The Bank Job
9. Let the Right One In
- And at number 10. Waltz With Bashir

If I had a top twenty there'd be a few more foreign titles and a couple more late year platforms and even a Disney cartoon (Bolt not Wall-E), but why complicate things in a weak year? The thing about the films listed one through ten was the sense of not wanting any of them to end. When they did finish was a feeling, although I may return to any of them in the future, of completion and satisfaction at having met a new friend.

Many of the titles have already opened and a couple of them are rolling out in January. Waltz With Bashir (opening January 23 at the Angelika) was such a combination of agitprop and animation that I didn't even know where to start with my admiration. This cartoon docudrama tells the tragedy of the massacre in the Sabra and Shatila camps during the 1982 Lebanon War. The story's told from the point of view of director Ari Folman, who was a teen soldier in the Israeli army at the time. Waltz With Bashir recreates Folman's memories through present day conversations with other soldiers who were also there and surreal scenes that illustrate their memories. The film ends with actual foot-age shot in the camps (dead children) and you realize that the horror was real.

CADILLAC RECORDS

It must be apparent in this day and age, but growing up I had no idea that Led Zeppelin stole "Whole Lotta Love" from Willie Dixon and that the Beach Boys, ah, appropriated "Sweet Little Sixteen" from Chuck Berry for their hit "Surfin' USA." Both Berry (Mos Def) and Dixon (Cedric the Entertainer) are portrayed in Cadillac Records, the story of Chess Records. With a narrative told in voice-over by Dixon the film weaves an emo-tional recounting of the record company with Adrien Brody at the center as founder Leonard Chess.

Brody's Chess has his own way of stack-ing the deck that includes burning down his nightclub for the insurance money to start a recording studio and record label. The behavior of Chess's top artists, like

Muddy Waters (Jeffrey Wright), Howlin' Wolf (Eammon Walker), and Little Walter (Columbus Short) runs the gamut from mur-der to womanizing and when Etta James (Beyonce Knowles) signs up add drug addic-tion. Knowles has been taking acting lessons because she's stealing scenes here. Walker demonstrates an amazing ability to chan-nel Wolf's musical genius while Def is a dead ringer for Berry. Wright, as always, demon-strates acting moves that show his versatility. Wright's diction may remind some of Robert Downey Jr. in Tropic Thunder.

Chess takes money from Peter to pay Paul and nobody seems to mind. The topic of artist equality is briefly touched upon but the movie really wants to concentrate on the legacy of music that these brilliant musi-cians created.

Director Darnell Martin has been work-ing mostly in television since her early feature I Like it Like That in 1994, but Cadillac Records shows her to be the equal if not capa-ble of greater reach than other femme helmers like Kimberly Peirce or Catherine Hardwicke. With its unblinking evocation of the 50s and 60s music scene and a sense of fair play in showing the artists warts and all Cadillac Records is bound to inspire a new generation to discover the blues.

DVD SLIGHT RETURN

If you're planning on hiding in the woods for the winter solstice on December 21, 2012 forget it, you'll still be paying bills come January 2013. That's the consensus of one interviewee from the documen-tary 2012: Science or Superstition (DVD



street date January 27, 2009). This release from the Disinformation Company also contains extras that take the viewer on a tour of the Mayan pyramid at Palenque as well as expound on the theories of Terence McKenna regarding fractal mathematics and mystical mind expansion. As another talking head explains there's a difference between opening the doors of perception and walking through said doors.

I found 2012: Science or Superstition fascinating on multiple levels. The concepts of Mithraism and the Vedic periapsis sent me scrambling to Wikipedia. The Mayan long count calendar that ends in 2012 merely predicts periods of time that are repeated like peaks and valleys throughout the ages. The shifting of the Earth's magnetic poles may occur over hundreds of years. The CMEs (coronal mass ejections) of our Sun could fry satellites. The Hopi Indians believe that the changes mark the progression from what they term the Fourth World into the Fifth World. The path of the moon, Earth and Sun are lining up at the center of the Milky Way in 2012.

All of these ideas are tossed at the viewer like fastballs in a pennant game. It's not important to accept each theory as fact so much as the information gleamed grounds you in a mindset that accepts our tiny place in a greater universe of change.

Meanwhile Sony Pictures is shooting 2012 with Roland Emmerich directing (set for release July of this year) while Warner Brothers is developing a Whitley Strieber novel on the phenomenon called 2012: The War for Souls.

2012: Science or Superstition won't sway you one way or another. Rather this doc reveals facets for further study from some of the more legitimate sources on the subject. There's so much information com-ing at you, from the participatory cosmology of the Mayans to Islamic astrology and the doctrine of lunar modes, that you'll have to watch more than once, if only for your own peace of mind.

From Paramount's Centennial Collection a 2 DVD set of Sunset Boulevard covers every bit of minutia surrounding what is hands down one of the best films ever made and certainly the sharpest skew-ering of Hollywood in a film. The fact the film was directed by Billy Wilder in 1950 only attests to its longevity and classic status.

It's a win-win situation whether you've seen it or not. If you haven't you're guaranteed an evening's worth of solid entertainment. A down on his luck young writer Joe Gillis (Bill Holden) moves in with an aging starlet Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson) to help her finish her rediscover-y script. "I'm big, it's the pictures that got small," Desmond laments.

If you've seen Sunset Boulevard there's a second DVD that has a short or documen-tary on every possible aspect of the film. The best for buff are outtakes of the origi-nal opening, which was cut after a disastrous preview. These clips (m.o.s.) show a corpse being wheeled into a morgue and the dead bodies having a conversation about what how they all got killed.

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🗞 | K.M.A

Editor's note: Kwame and his wife just had a baby. Actually, she had the baby and he is just handling the freaking out part. He is going through the standard sleep deprivation that parents go through the first several month's of infancy. Hence, his writing and thought process are way more non-linear and erratic than usual. Yeah, that's hard to imagine. See for yourself.

HAPPY NEW YEAR! The camera's flash, he turns and takes a sip from his beer, and he looks lovingly at his family and he says, "I wonder if they still have nachos." Parents, what up parents! I've recently joined the fraternity of paternal matriarchy. A strange world it is, that of the rule maker. For now, that is what I am. No longer the casual voyeur. All the bullshit I think, someone will think it's wonderful and they may try to initiate my theory only to be deeply saddened by the conclusion. Oh the pressure. For if "they" were wrong, I would not be "right". The dilemma lies in the need for a mistake: parenting and music. Music! Music is a confusing phenomenon; not even just popular music in general. You know what I hope to see in 2009? I want to see bands and not gadgets and problems, but bands. How hard is it to write a song and a melody? A lot of musical groups best songs sound like parts of a better song, it is staggering. So yeah...

Anyway, it's January, month of my birth. I have a beautifully complex wife, I have a beautiful, beautiful daughter, I have a job, and I guess, because I'm black, a President that look likes me. Can he overlook all the other shit? We have one of the worst economic situations of our lifetimes, the job crisis, and all of that other shit. The rhetoric stands: he's black like me. He is not the president, he's *THE* president. Amen. So, it should be a good year, right? It will be.

Anyways, What was the best album of last year? : **TV On The Radio's Dear**

Science apparently. It was a good album. Well, whatever, you read my year-end thingy. So what's up for this year? **Antony and the Johnsons**, that's what. Did you hear the EP? It's gonna be wonderful...

CDS AND/OR MP3S AND/OR STREAMS OR DOWNLOADS AND OR...

ANTONY and the JOHNSONS The Crying Light (Secretly Canadian)

I thought this was coming out last year. Needless to say, I'll take it when it's ready to be taken. Antony is one of the few artists whose albums are moments because his older songs hold so much weight. I listen to a lot of Nina Simone. I'm not saying this sounds like Nina Simone but I'm saying it resonates like Nina Simone. It's an artist who is constantly taking chances with the song. But these ARE songs. They're not hooks, or parts, rather whole songs. Brilliance from the launch to conclusion. It's not as much waiting for an album, as it is a new composition and another addition to a magnificent catalog. *Another World* is a song that is complimentary and familiar to the artist. It fits what has

been done and what is to be done. This will be one the first moments of the New Year to me. Have you seen the cover?

BLACKOUT BEACH Skin Of Evil (Soft Abuse)

Carey Mercer is a storyteller. Inside of one of his songs lie a town and townsfolk, rumors, suspicion, doubt, fear, and death. Sometimes it's as if he doesn't sing but he howls, and he growls. He conveys the emotion, the belief, the disbelief, the faith and the delusion. On the first track on Blackout Beach, the lyrics, as haunting as they might have been, were decorated with a soundtrack that evoked the despair and the mystery of the world depicted in the lyrics. The songs were short, but the effect was sustained. *Skin Of Evil* is said to be a concept album, which I guess, is more in the terms of a running narrative. As the atmosphere seems nearly as important as the lyrics themselves, the first glimpse, *Cloud Of Evil*, is bare in arrangement but the sounds flow through like wind. Phrases appear and dissolve. And so it begins...

ANIMAL COLLECTIVE Merriweather Post Pavilion (Domino)

Animal Collective have some how managed to get weirder and more popular. Their shows consist of the band members standing behind a board, almost like DJs, mixing and fading sounds, with an occasional bit of guitar. To an extent, since their classic *Sung Tongs*, they can seem to do no wrong in the eyes of the rock press. Throughout all of this they've crafted a more melodic sound while still bearing hints that they could go left at any second. Now they are as much Bjork as they are the Beach Boys. It's hard to even say if the word 'rock' even applies their current incarnation. Still, *Water Curses* was probably one of the

best things put out last year and it was an EP. *Strawberry Jam* was a poppy affair but what the hell was "# 1?" There's no telling what Animal Collective sound the band will do but whether you-likey or too-psyche, I'm sure this album will be incredible.

TOO MANY GOOD UPCOMING SHOWS AT WALTER'S

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01.17.09 | **Walter's**
Booty rap, 2 Live Crew, indie rock club (?)

LOS CAMPESINOS
01.29.09 | **Walter's**
Rock like Deerhoof/Yo La Tengo good indie rock- lots of members like a football team doing Sonic Youth.

FUCKED UP
01.30.09 | **Walter's**
Hardcore punk rock, The Fall, Television, break stuff, scary, you might get spit on or hit with something, dangerous, piles of people screaming at the singer.

SUGGESTED READING

SHOCK DOCTRINE
Naomi Klein (Picador)

THE CULTURE OF NARCISSISM
Christopher Lasch (Norton)

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY: The Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge
Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckman (Anchor Books)

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ANIMAL COLLECTIVE
& their new album: Merriweather Post Pavilion (Domino)



TASTE OF GARLIC
01.10 | RUDYARDS



THA FUCKING TRANSMISSION
01.17 | WALTER'S



PERSEPH ONE
01.24 | FITZ



DROP TRIO
01.30 | AVANTGRADEN



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RUDYARDS }

SUPER HAPPY FUN LAND TO RE-OPEN SOON. HOPEFULLY.

BY OMAR AFRA



ALL THE VENUE CLOSINGS THIS PAST YEAR HAS BEEN HARD ON THE HOUSTON MUSIC SCENE.

2008 MARKED THE DEMISE OF The Proletariat, Engine Room, and temporarily Super Happy Fun Land. To give you a brief synopsis, Houston's favorite uber-eclectic outsider art house and music venue SHFL operated out of a house in the Heights for 5 years until the property owners squeezed them out. Well, the silver lining was that they found a new home in a gigantic warehouse just east of downtown that could facilitate larger shows, more art, and crazier antics. So we at Free Press Houston decided to have a giant shindig at the new venue to celebrate our 5th anniversary and the opening of the great new spot. The place was packed. Err, too packed. The fire marshals came and, lo and behold, SHFL did not have adequate occupancy permitting to permit such an event. They of course got ticketed out the watoozy and have since been jumping through all the municipal hurdles required to submit building plans, acquire

permits, and such to open their doors legit. It looked rather bleak for a while as the city does not exactly get excited about doing what it takes to get outsider-art venues open. After having their plans denied several times and given the run around for nearly a year, the good folks at SHFL have got their chance. Their plans were recently approved and they are set for a final inspection in early January to get their occupancy permit. Problem is, they need help. They need help painting, laying gravel, and could probably use a donation or 2 to get them ready for this impending city interrogation. Brian, Olivia, and Louie at Super Happy have been hosting music and art for years on end now as a virtual philanthropy and surely deserve your help. Frankly, a community effort is needed here. If you have a shred of love in your heart, holler at Brian at 713.252.7706 or at info@superhappyfunland.com

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Numbers

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JANUARY BAND LISTINGS

WEDNESDAYS Jan. 7 - Blowtorch Repair (<i>Keith York Returns</i>) Jan. 14 - The ONS Band Jan. 21 - Niteshift Jan. 28 - Matchstick (<i>Giancarlo & his Big Stick</i>)	FRIDAYS Jan. 2 - 13 Passes Jan. 9 - Mr. Hand's Revenge Jan. 16 - Echoz (<i>Dance-n-Fun Band</i>) Jan. 23 - Electric Bite (<i>Rock-n-Dance Band</i>) Jan. 30 - Infinity's Twin	SATURDAYS Jan. 3 - The Fab 5 (<i>Beatles & 60's Tribute Band</i>) Jan. 10 - Chili Peckers (<i>Red Hot Chili Peppers Tribute</i>) Jan. 17 - Already Gone (<i>Eagles Tribute</i>) and Abbey Rode (<i>Beatles Tribute</i>) Jan. 24 - Fireball (<i>Deep Purple Tribute</i>) with Oz Knozz (<i>Legendary Houston Rockers</i>) Jan. 31 - Love It To Death (<i>Alice Cooper Tribute</i>)
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WEEKENDS IN JANUARY:
Jan 3: Kamalicca
Jan 9: Will Hudgens w/ Three Wisemen
Jan 10: Opie Hendrix w/Carrie Ann & the Apocalyptics
Jan 16: Tin Can Phone
Jan 17: Congas By Carlos, Al Bettis & Bayou Monster
Jan 23: Hueman & Guests
Jan 24: Generation Landslide
Jan 30: Wino Vino
Jan 31: Carolyn Wonderland

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SAT. JAN. 24:
PUNK BUNNY PUNK FEST

FRI. JAN. 30:
TSOL W/
BLACK PRESIDENT

SAT. JAN. 31:
GRIFFIN HOUSE

SUN. FEB 1:
REGGAE/SKA FEST w/
THE SLACKERS

THU. FEB. 5:
PRETTY THINGS PEEPSHOW

FRI. FEB. 7:
DON CABALLERO

THU. FEB. 12:
ESCAPE THE FATE

FRI. FEB. 13:
MILLIONAIRES W/
CASH CASH.
I SET MY FRIENDS ON FIRE.
WATCHOUT! THERE'S
GHOSTS

SAT. FEB. 14:
SWEET TEMPTATIONS 2:
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Chase Hamblin

Thu. 8 Lotus Effect

Fri. 9 Alpha Rev

Sat. 10
Taste of Garlic,
Worlds Most Dangerous

Thu. 15 Arcane Alchemy

Fri. 16 Sand Rubies

Sat. 17 Action Is

Tue. 20
Grown Up Story Time

Thu. 22
Super Pancho Combo

Fri. 23 Shea Van Winkle

Sat. 24 Dollyrockers

Fri. 30
The Boxing Lesson, The Pons, Your
Kisses Cause Crashes

Sat. 31
Linus Pauling Quartet, MV & EE, Wols

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SHREYAS MOH 2009

SOMETHING FIERCE

🎧 | Ramon Medina 🎨 | S.Garcia

SOMETHING FIERCE HAS BEEN ONE OF HOUSTON’S MOST PRIZED EXPORTS WITH THEIR MIX OF PUNK ENERGY, CATCHY MELODIES, AND AN UNDYING DIY ETHOS. THEIR NEWEST ALBUM - “THERE ARE NO ANSWERS” - EASILY SURPASSES THEIR DEBUT ALBUM WITH SONGS SO SHARPLY WRITTEN THAT THEY WILL RUN YOU THROUGH LIKE A KATANA WITH TOSHIRO MIFUNE AT THE OTHER END.

WE LOVED THE NEW ALBUM so much that we immediately poked and prodded Niki Seven and Steven Garcia with questions as they prepared for their upcoming tour and here is what they had to say:

ON THE NEW ALBUM VS. THE FIRST ALBUM

SG: We’ve definitely fine-tuned our love for powerpop over the last few years. I know that I’ve gravitated to writing razor-sharp pop songs, while maintaining an even darker tone in the lyrics. We took more time [on the new album] and that gave us a lot of opportunities to think about real production for the songs.

N.7: I’ve definitely enjoyed the freedom that we’ve had with this album. ‘Bastards’ was recorded in two days from start to finish; ‘There Are No Answers’ has been a long two-year road in writing and months of recording. We’ve had more time to explore with the songs and figure out what sounded right. Most of the songs on this album don’t sound anything like they did when they were originally written.

ON WRITING SONGS AND TRACKING ALBUMS

SG: I start writing a song with a feeling in mind. I pound away for hours at a time on my own or through various band prac-

tices. We can feel the song “working” or sense it slowly dying. It’s a real disappointment when a song dies out because I feel like I missed an opportunity to seize what was there. When the song does work, we pour our hearts into thinking about what the final version will sound like.

N.7: We’ve all developed an instinct we can tell right away which direction [a song is] going to go.. whether it’s going to be great, whether it needs work, or if it just needs to be put out of its misery as quick and painless as possible. “Modern Girl” has been recorded at least three times. I would have been disappointed releasing one of the previous versions, but this version I think has captured the very best this song has.

SG: There has to be real thought injected into your recordings because those are what will live on beyond the band. Making a good album is very much like making a mix tape. The track listing matters to me, and I had this one song that I could not fit anywhere. The pacing was so different; the beginning and end too abrupt. Finally, we made the decision to cut it from the album, and I think it was a good choice.

ON SINGLES

SG: We got the idea [of including songs from singles] from looking at punk bands

Free Press Houston 🎧 Issue 99 | 01/09

like The Buzzcocks, It’s a fantastic way to keep the songwriter away from writing an “album” and instead just focusing on each individual song.

N.7: The Buzzcocks are my absolute favorite band. ‘Singles Going Steady’ is an amazing record and the notion of creating an album out of singles released for years and years is incredibly genius. For us, I think it just keeps us thinking about the present. It keeps us focused on writing new songs and not re-hashing old ones time and time again. It’s also a great way to keep people interested in a band. It looks like you’re doing more if you keep releasing all these singles than if you just do an album every two or three years.

ON LESSONS LEARNED

SG: I’ve learned how to design lots of artwork, master for vinyl, play bar chords, fold a map, order at Hot Doug’s, record with two amps at the same time, book national tours, clean a bird off of a windshield, clean beer off of my guitar, share a van with five other people, wear a tuxedo for my brother’s wedding, maintain sanity on a 16-hour drive, find ways to get a free motel room, wear

thermal underwear, and most importantly, I’ve learned that water freezes if left in a van overnight at freezing temperatures thus causing the unfortunate result of being temporarily non-potable when you are dying for a drop of something to wash down the previous night’s...everything.

N.7: Don’t give Andrew a glove. Don’t sit next to Andrew when a rap song is on. Don’t give Andrew a camera and access to your laptop. Steven knows most of the words to some Spice Girls songs. Don’t share a blanket with Jeoaf (Monocles) .. he will take it all. Steven is willing to pay me \$5 every time I change his strings. 80’s music is good for driving 8 solid hours through the night when everyone else falls asleep. Wisconsin beer has a higher alcohol content than Texas beer .. pace yourself!!! iPods and books are essential for keeping up your sanity. Yes, boys can pee anywhere and in anything (and if they manage to pee into a sprite bottle, they will carry it around like a trophy). [While on tour] I have now seen more of Andrew’s ass than I ever hoped I would.

...I love it and I can’t think of any other way I’d rather waste my life.

FPH



 **SOMETHING FIERCE**
& THEIR NEW ALBUM THERE ARE NO ANSWERS



FREE PRESS HOUSTON
ISSUE 100
CELEBRANZA

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WORST OF HOUSTON

✍️ | Tim Dorsey

18 | feature.freepresshouston.com

HERE WE ARE AGAIN

ANOTHER JANUARY AND ANOTHER WORST OF HOUSTON. SO LET US CLARIFY OUR INTENTIONS WITH THIS FEATURE. WE WISH NOT TO DENIGRATE OUR FAIR CITY BUT TO LIFT IT UP BY SHINING A LIGHT ON HOUSTON’S MOST PUTRID ASPECTS IN THE HOPES THAT WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO ERADICATE THEM. FAIR ENOUGH? WELL, READ ON AND LET US KNOW.



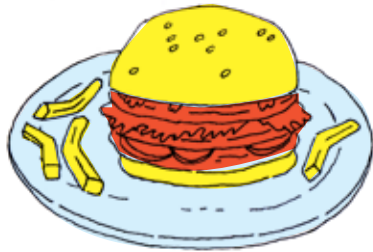
Worst Magazine

DOWNTOWN MAGAZINE

This goes beyond simply being bad; this is worthy of contempt! Even at first glance Downtown Magazine stinks of a publisher with infinite monetary resources and an inversely proportional amount of brains and taste to go with it. Just look at it - a thick cardstock cover, thick glossy pages, and even thin metallic red lettering; we’re talking big bucks here. There’s nothing wrong with having money behind your publication but, unfortunately, you open up this rag and it’s devoid of any worthwhile content or personality. It reads with less charm than a Greensheet except that, instead of trying to sell you a 1972 Chevy that’s natu-

rally air conditioned, the brain trust at the Houston Downtown Management District and the Houston Downtown Alliance are trying to sell you on the idea that Downtown is the land of the wealthy, hip, and cultured. The only problem with this charade is the writing and the layout have the same sanitized and soulless plastic smile as someone greeting you in a visitor center and all readers can do is to cringe, shake it’s hand, then find the nearest bathroom to wash-off the ickyness. My suggestion to HDMD and HDA - stop wasting your member’s money on this fiasco and take up another less embarrassing hobby.

-Ramon Medina



THERE ARE 1.1 MILLION
UNINSURED RESIDENTS
OF HARRIS COUNTY.

Worst local statistics
**HOUSTON (AND TEXAS')
UNINSURED RESIDENTS**

There are 1.1 million uninsured residents of Harris County. Considering there are 40 million uninsured nationwide, we have one of the highest rates and more than our fair share. That's basically one in four people. The huge number of uninsured residents here means that health officials must make tough decisions every day about who gets treated and when. That equals rationing. As for Texas, it Sadly rates 1st in the amount of uninsured children in the state which is a staggering 24.1 percent according to the Census Bureau. According to USA today, "The state has forfeited more than \$900 million in federal money under the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) during the past six years because it wouldn't put up 28 cents for each 72 cents in federal aid. Restrictions put in place in 2003 cut about 200,000 children from the program in a state with the highest percentage of uninsured children, nearly twice the national average." Let's face it, the system is broken.

- Omar Afra

*Worst Juxtaposition of an
impeccably, amazing burger
with an inadequate fry count*

Now I'm not saying this place is a "worst", they just may be the best, but, their balance of fry to burger ratio is balanced like the Harris County Crime Lab. Come on guys, we know you have bags of those things in the little back area by the Dart Board, BUST EM OUT! I don't understand the logic in providing the best Veggie Burger IN TOWN right next to the most meager portion of potato sidekicks IN LIFE. Several Houstonians have even suggested drawing a comic detailing the lives of the M.I.A. Rudyard's Fries --- Are they out at the Seawall tryin to catch waves before the sun comes up? Have they found a more comfortable plate to rest their burnt ends? Please Rudz, please, for the love of all things Montrosian, find the fries and schedule them to work doubles.

-Shelby Hohl

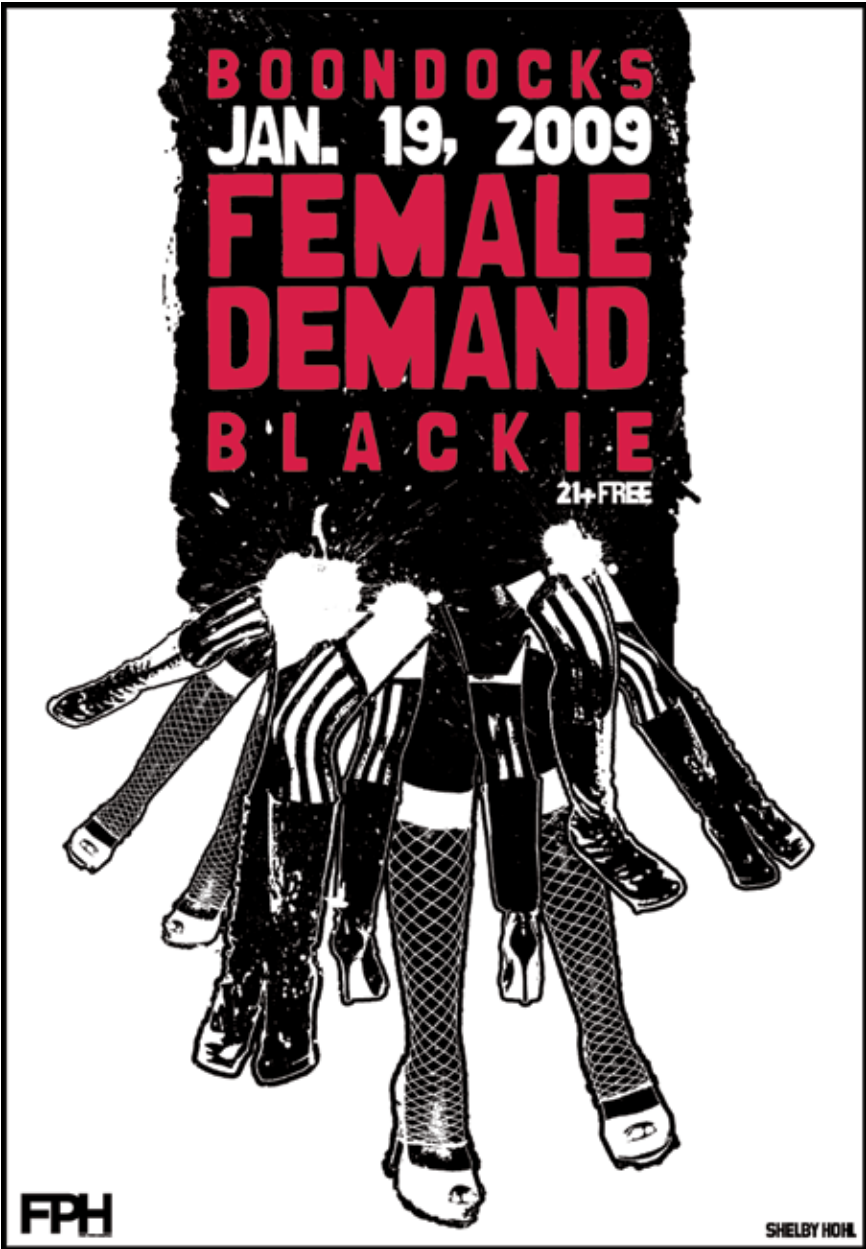
Worst Media Fraud
**THE 'RETURN' OF
THE PUBLIC NEWS**

Ken Petty, an ex-evangelist out of Spring, TX tried to 're-launch' the old beloved Public News this last year. PN was the standard bearer for underground music, art, and feature papers in this town before it was gobbled up by the parent company of the Houston Press. Well, the DBA that Houston Press acquired expired leaving the brand un-owned. Seeing this 'golden' opportunity, Petty paid the 10 bux for the DBA and tried his darndest to publish the shittiest piece of shit shit he could muster called Public News. He stole the original logo which is now ostensibly intellectual property owner by Houston Press, went and downloaded a 10 year old version of Pagemaker, and got right to work. Managing only enough gumption to defraud enough advertisers and bamboozle staffers to publish 1 issue, the new version of what was the voice of the Montrose became rife with advertorials, articles about crap bands, and rants against the Montrose. It shortly thereafter folded and the internet is littered with complaints from staff members and advertisers who Petty owes money or lied to. Anyways, fuck you Ken Petty for trashing the good name of Public News (who many FPH staffers previously worked for.)

-Kevin

Worst of Local Band Beefs

Okay so Houston may not have the greatest music scene in the world but, at the very least, everyone involved should practice some kind solidarity to strengthen our growing musical nest. When I hear about local bands "beefing" I want to throw all parties involved in the trunk of an 88' Olds', drive them to Trinity Gardens and let anyone named "Tre" show them what real beef is. For one thing, what would Houston bands have to beef about? "That" girl in "that" band has the same streak in her hair as "that" girl from "that" band? Oh, "so and so" didn't let you use their amp after they were done playing? Come on guys, none of this bullshit necessitates a "beef". A beef is necessitated by the following: When



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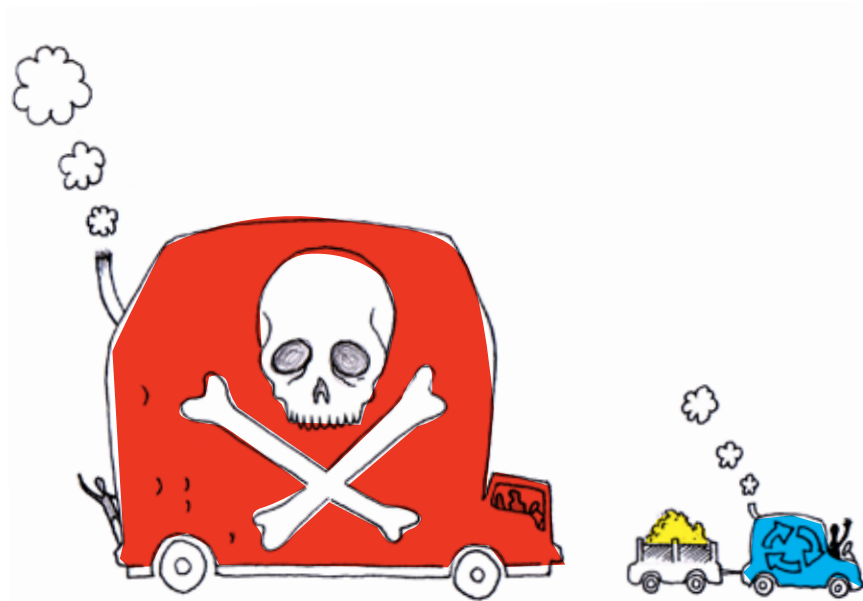
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rappers aren't good enough lyricists to have fans or just want some publicity, they will copy Tupac and Biggie and set up a beef with another rapper.

Their audience of mainly wannabe, gangsta-rich, white folk love this because if they meet another wannabe gangsta who listens to a rival of their favourite rapper, they are allowed to exchange poorly thought-up insults such as 'yo mama'.

Get it right or pay the price – MORE HOUSTON PRESS ARTICLES TALKING ABOUT "LACK OF SCENE".

-Shelby Hohl

Worst Eco-Friendly Farce

HOUSTON'S RECYCLING RANKING

Houston was rightfully labeled as the nation's worst recycling city this year in a waste survey encompassing the country's 30 largest cities. Though we are the energy capital of the world and the fourth largest city in the nation, we came in last place compared to over 26 cities with a smaller population, with only 2.6% of our waste being recycled. That pales in comparison to San Francisco, who ranked first with an impressive 69% of their trash being recycled. Just one more thing to add to the 'Why Houston Sucks' box.

-Andrea Afra

Worst Newspaper

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY BULLETIN

It seems like every year this award goes to

The Houston Chronicle, but this year a small alt-weekly from the suburbs is much more deserving. The Montgomery County Bulletin was investigated by the Washington Post's online magazine Slate in August for plagiarism. Since almost every article in the Bulletin was stolen, Jody Rosen, the reporter who broke the story, wondered if "in purely statistical terms, do the articles in the Montgomery County Bulletin amount to the greatest plagiarism scandal in the annals of American journalism?"

After the Slate article went live on August 6 the Columbia Journalism Review, one of the largest academic journals in the country devoted to the study of journalism, openly mocked the Bulletin for obviously stealing from such obscure sources as USA Today, Rolling Stone, Salon, Boston Globe, Dallas Observer and the Houston Press.

Honorable Mention: Houston Chronicle (for tradition's sake).

-Alex

Worst Example of HPD'S Not-So-Hidden Fascist Agenda

ARMORED VEHICLES IN MONTROSE TELLING PEOPLE TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES DURING IKE

It was bad enough having to camp out in your own home in the aftermath of a natural disaster. It was worse having to deal with the insufferable insult of being told you could not leave the aforementioned home after dark, for fear of being treated like a looter.



But the absolute shit icing on the cake was the sight of what looked like HPD-logo'd armored personnel carriers roaming the streets, and having to listen to some asshole cop over a loudspeaker reminding you that you were locked down like the inhabitant of some wretched 3rd world banana republic that can't spend a dime on infrastructure, but has tons of cash for paramilitary toys....

Houston isn't really a city; it's just a big machine for administering the interests of petroleum conglomerates...in the aftermath of Ike, that became all too painfully apparent.

-M.Martin

Worst Fresh Baked Bread ALL KROGER'S STORES

Will someone please tell me what that funny yet not at all delicious smell is that emanates from the Kroger's bakery? I've tried many of their made in-store breads and even the pastries have an odd taste and odor reminiscent of institutional floor wax and warmed over feet. I just can't quite place it.

-Aziza

Worst Sound Guy TAKE A GUESS...

He works at the House of Blues now, but before that he just recently got fired from The Meridian. Before that he was fired from The Engine Room. Both places are synonymous in the music community as having the worst possible sound and it's been because of him. I bet House of Blues starts giving locals and nationals the same shoddy treatment he gave

to everyone at his old venues.

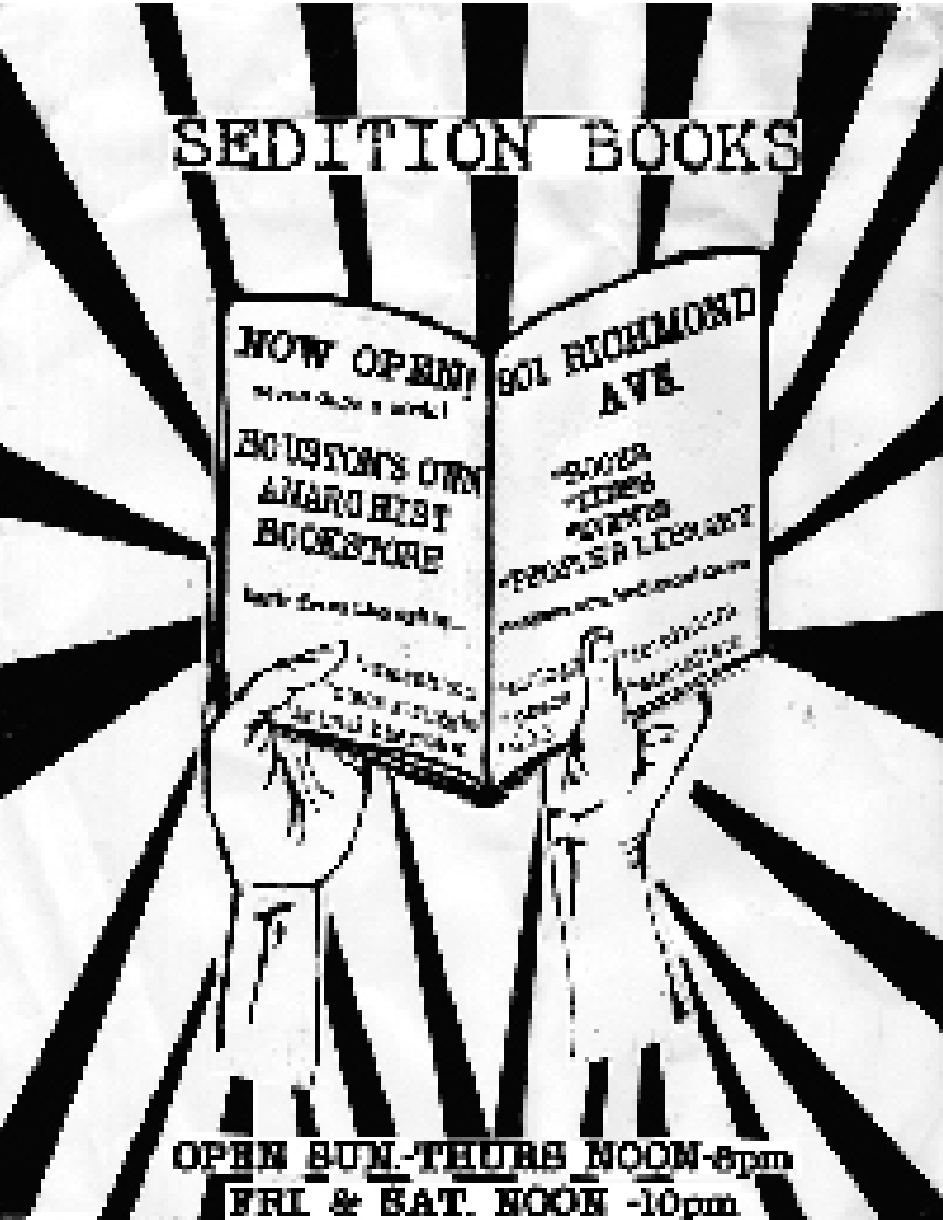
He is, hands down, the worst sound guy in town.

-MB

Worst Drivers WESTSIDE COMMUTERS

I speak specifically of soccer moms and corporate dads. You people are fucking crazy. Flying past me on the freeway at 90mph+ risking my and my children's lives just so you can gain a few minutes off your daily soul sucking commute. I get the fact that you are used to high speeds and that from your oversized house-on-wheels vehicles, it doesn't feel that fast. But I drive the speed limit in the slow lane just to stay out of your suicidal way and still you ride my ass, passing around me so close that your side tires don't even leave my lane. I used to make that drive myself but I realized that time is more precious than saving a few bucks on a shittily built home that looks like every other future tear down within 10 miles in exchange for the joie de vie being sucked out of me with every rotation of my wheels. Either move closer to where you work/shop/drink or slow the fuck down. Attention Soccer Moms: We built you an eighteen lane wide freeway to try and thwart the congestion you cause each day because you insist on barreling around town in your Suburbans while your 3.2 children are not even in the vehicle. I wonder how many lives would be saved if just cut to the chase and built you a Saks Fifth Avenue out at Katy Mills.

-Commandrea



HOUSTON WAS RIGHTFULLY LABELED AS THE NATION'S WORST RECYCLING CITY THIS YEAR IN A WASTE SURVEY

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**Worst of Guilty Feelings Only
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HAVING POWER DURING IKE**

Every friend, neighbor, foe, and Lost Boy, experienced an extended loss of all things electrical during the weeks following Hurricane Ike. However, a few of us had power and were morally obligated to cater to anyone who needed anything from charging cell phones to just sitting in the air conditioning. I was one of the “chosen” and did not realize the severity of the power shortage most of Houston was enduring. During the first few hours of all power being out – I returned to my well-lit home, proceeded to set up a 150w Flood Light, and attempted to burn a screen for a concert poster that was due the next day, for a show that ended up not happening due to the weather. While my friends were scrambling to find ANYWHERE to charge their cell phones, I managed to short out my breaker box three times (that I just went and flipped back on), cooked 3-course meals, and caught up on any Adult Swim cartoons I may have missed. I just want to say sorry to everyone for being ungrateful, I should have actually made myself into a “worst of” oh well, maybe next year.

-Shelby Hohl

**Worst City Revenue Generator
SEX TRADE**

Take the money and run. That’s the motto behind the City of Houston’s stance on the sex trade in Houston. Never mind the studies that show how the majority of sex workers are victims of bad circumstance or worse yet, slaves via the human trafficking circuit, there’s money to be made, people! Play along and you’ll reap the rewards too. Hundreds of local businesses pay annual fees for sexually oriented business licenses to operate store front brothels posing as ‘massage parlors’ et al. Also consider the cash generated by task squads during raids and prostitution stings,

where not only are fines issued, but all cash and valuables on the person or property that is busted are seized and auctioned off for a sweet commission.

-Andrea Afra

**Worst cable Provider
COMCAST**

Comcast Cable plays good cop, bad cop with their customers. They will send you a notice that they are raising the rates of their Internet service for instance. When I called they told me my rate would be the same, yet when the bill came it was double the previous month’s bill. When you call, of course, you have to go through the usual phone menu. The billing department just refers you to a supervisor. They give you a number that nobody ever answers and when you get to the beep to leave a message the mailbox is full.

As fate would have it I ran into an old friend who works for Satan, er I mean Comcast. He told me what to do, and now dear reader I will reveal the secret to you. Call Comcast, go through the menu but instead of pushing the number for billing, push the number for Technical. Tell tech that you want to drop your service. Tech will immediately switch you to a covert department called Save. The save department will make everything right, reduce your payment amount or whatever it takes to keep you from dropping your service. Ta-da.

-Mr. Don’t attach my name to this
because ComCast will fuck me

**Worst of Local
‘Non-News’ Coverage
HURRICANE EDUARDO**

Wow, can we say weather machine any louder? Local news stations had field reporters scouring the Seawall for any sign of cataclysmic fear tactic they could instill in the Houston public. For what was very obviously just a government test to see if New

Orleans could withstand another storm, and a reason to implement Military Police at every corner of any metropolitan area on the Gulf Coast, the newscasters really made “Hurricane” Eduardo seem as if our only saviors would be our beautiful boys in blue and not asking any questions. I saw newscasters standing at 33 degree angles(wink wink) with NO WIND EVEN BLOWING to show Houstonians “how crazy it really was out there”. It makes one wonder what goes through the head of someone who is knowingly lying to all of their neighbors and loved ones about potential catastrophe for ratings that are only dropping because YouTube exists. Maybe the local news stations should send their field reporters into cyber space to create mock tragedies affecting all potential YouTube views for two weeks. Whatever you do, next time they feed us bullshit, don’t be afraid to ask why it smells funny.

-Shelby Hohl

**Worst Stench
MOST BARS AFTER THE
SMOKING BAN STARTED**

We have all waited patiently and hoped that it would gradually diminish but to our olafactorial dismay, it has only gotten worse. Somewhere betwixt the realms of pickle-relish and red wine vinaigrette, lies the odor that has been left behind in the bars after the smoke has long cleared. Regular barflies may have grown accustomed to their watering hole’s signature fragrance, but for those of us who bar hop, each establishment is distinguished by its own eau de funk.

-Commandrea

**Worst Local Wikipedia Editor
POSTOAK**

Local Wiki editor ‘PostOak’ has a beef with FPH. After we truthfully and accurately adding the 2006 Worst of Houston accolade to socialite-philanthropist Carolyn Farb’s entry,



**HUNDREDS OF LOCAL BUSINESSES PAY
ANNUAL FEES FOR SEXUALLY ORIENTED
BUSINESS LICENSES TO OPERATE**

this friend of Farb removed our addition. After we reposted it, he again removed it and subsequently removed the Free Press Houston Wiki-profile by citing it as a ‘non-notable’ publication. This was clearly a vindictive act not befitting an editor. If you know who this piss-ant is and let us know, we will buy you a steak and lobster dinner.

-Omar Afra

**Worst Public-Private Partnership
DISCOVERY GREEN**

If you had not read our 2008 feature on this park, then let me give you the skinny on Discovery Green. This city spent 122 million dollars on this park that is basically a green top to an overpriced parking garage. Think Kemah Boardwalk meets Sugarland Mall. There ain’t much green about it. It’s basically a couple fields, a playground, and a murky brown ‘pond’ that serve to facilitate traffic into the 2 restaraunts located in the ‘park’. Also, this is a public-private partnership so you can’t do the things you do at other parks such as barbecue, serve food to the homeless, etc. Considering the exceedingly high amount of neighborhood parks in Houston that are in disrepair, it’s a abomination to spend 122 million+ dollars on this plastic ‘park’.

-Omar Afra

**Worst City ordinance
HOUSTON NEWSRACK
ORDINANCE**

Sharon Lauder, publisher of the Houston Tribune, has appeared before City Council

numerous times attesting to the unfairness of the ordinance which requires all sidewalk newsracks to be within specific parameters in size and weight, set atop a 95 pound concrete base, made of metal, and “fir green” in color.

According to Ms. Lauder, only a small percent of newspaper publishers were invited to the pre-planning of the ordinance, none of whom use the plastic newsracks. Most of the publishers of smaller, free papers use the plastic racks because they do not rust. Because they are free, these publications don’t need coin operated boxes (i.e. metal boxes) which are more cost prohibitive.

She also asserts that the ordinance was twice altered to accomodate the Houston Press.

Ms. Lauder asserts that the practical effect of this ordinance is to make it impossible for small papers to distribute using newsracks and thereby limits the freedom of the press. Being unable to make any progress with City Council, Ms. Lauder filed a lawsuit in the Federal Court.

-Jo Collier

**Worst way to conduct
public business
METRO RAIL**

Do the people fear eminent domain powers run amock? Does the street flood?

Will they rob the property owners? What do you think.

With the current eco impacts, we may see Metro only build a rail line, but someday we will see the fruit of the seed planted by Metro’s authority to take 162 acres of



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land around each rail station, or stop as it were. And the idiots I know say, “Oh I’ll just go to the mayor and stop that.” Sure thing. Who do think set this up with the local power dealers?

-Mr. Anonymous

Worst Vulgar Display of religion
GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH
Pastor Steve Riggle of Grace has proposed a daisy of an idea to build a 150 ft. high cross at both the north and south extremes of Houston where the two campuses of his church are. I am all for freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and freedom in general. But some things are just done in bad taste and are inflammatory. Considering the city just put the kibosh on the giant inflatable promo animals that car lots use, why not this symbol of genocide, oppression, and capitalism as well?

-Omar Afra

Worst Art Appreciator in Houston
WAYNE DOLCEFINO
“So maybe someday cavemen trying to frighten traffic on Allen Parkway or a girl making nice with a Dr. Pepper bottle will sort of be like a Picasso.” –Wayne Dolcefino

The face of the Channel 13 Undercover Team, aka “Dolcefinko” aka “WD-400” aka “I Said No”, is sneering his way to infamy. No further evidence is needed than his constantly revised Wikipedia page, where spirited but spurious allegations like “Wayne rapes Asian babies” keep popping up. Dolcefino spent November digging up dirt on the Houston Arts Alliance, and devoted the opening segment on the seven o’clock news for a week and a half to convincing viewers they were being fleeced by the only public arts program in Houston. Ignoring the fact that a hotel occupancy tax that funds HAA is actually paid for by visitors to the city, WD-400 pounded away at HAA Director Jonathan Glus like a sweaty impotent drunk in the broom closet with his cousin. He asked Glus to read a sentence, which he shouldn’t have agreed to. It’s funny when people say “I’m not gay but I want someone to fuck me in the ass as soon as possible” on TV, but its not recommended for those who hold a decent job. Five chin-wagging reports later Dolcefinko decided to take on glasstire.com,

which is partially funded by the Houston Arts Alliance. I really don’t want to imagine his drooly delight when he watched a piece posted on B.S. Houston Artblog by the Performance Art Lab called “Dr. Pepper.” I would like to know the randy jokes he made up the next day when he brought the video into work and showed his co-workers (who probably don’t like him very much) the satiric advertisement where a woman fellates, ahem, deep throats, a bottle of good ‘ol DP. Oh yeah, he put it on the tube. He played two seconds of the beginning and then blurred the image, launching into a whole ‘too hot for TV’ routine. “Should YOU be paying for this smut?” The artist in a collective posted it on Youtube, the blogger picked it up and posted a link, the non-profit who employed the blogger received a grant from the organization that funds art with money received from the tourist tax, and the reporter who was too bored to find a real scandal says that you shouldn’t pay for it. God this is all so stupid. In his farewell, Dolcefino made a short aside, which qualified him as the Worst Art Appreciator of the Year: “Just so you will know, one viewer argued the Dr. Pepper video is art, because it’s really mocking the use of sex to market beverages. Go figure.”

Worst shit that has happened to local music
VENUE CLOSINGS
2008 was a shitty year for Houston live music venues. Proletariat closed. Engine Room closed. Super Happy Fun Land closed temporarily. Notsuoh maybe sold. Fuck.

-Omar Afra

Worst dick move
GREAT AMERICAN INSURANCE
Great American Insurance refused to pay \$25 million in liability for a 2007 office fire that killed three people.

The basics: In 2007 Vocational Nurse Misty Ann Weaver started a fire to cover the fact that she had missed a paperwork deadline. The fire raged out of control and three people died from smoke inhalation. Since the people died from smoke inhalation instead of flames, Great American is trying to use a “pollution exclusion” to avoid paying for the deaths. Apparently in the mind of Great American a fire produces light, heat and smog.

-Alex

Worst Death
PIMP C

The Pimp is gone. What a waste. Sizzurp, along with the rest of opiates, fucking suck. “My man RoRo jus lost his baby in a house fire. And then when I got on my knees that night to pray. I asked God why he let these killas live and take my homeboy’s son away. Man if you got kids show em you love em cuz God jus might call em home. Cuz one day you here but baby the next day you gone.” -Pimp C from One Day

-Omar Afra

Worst Fall from Grace
LUBY’S CAFETERIA
I ate so much Luby’s when I was a kid that it has permanently mutated into my DNA. I have great memories their of fried fish, mash potatoes, and green beans. Unfortunately, the homegrown cafeteria was bought out by the Pappas company and has evolved into a middle school cafeteria. My first gripe is that now just about every single vegetable has bacon in it. I mean, a motherfucker says ‘I wanna eat vegetables’. Let him eat vegetables without the ass of swine. Both kinds of green beans they offer have bacon. Even more annoying, despite the cafeteria setting, Luby’s now has waiters come to your table after you have purchased and paid for your food. They want tips for bringing you napkins and straws. Their prices have gone up as everyone else’s has yet the quality has taken the plunge. I now got to Cleburnes.

Worst bunch of Bastards
HPD
That’s right fuckers. You won’t find me. I am the one that put boogers in your cheese-burger. Go fucking catch a burglar instead of harrassing me for my music being too loud. I know some of you guys are good, but the lion’s share of you screw it up for the 3 or 4 nice cops.

-Belligerent Me

Worst resignation
PAUL BETTENCOURT
Former Harris County Tax-Assessor Collector Paul Bettencourt was without a doubt the sleaziest resignation in a year dominated by sleazy resignations. Bettencourt resigned a month after being re-elected in order to

“pursue a career in the private sector.” By resigning almost as soon as he was re-elected he screwed the voters by giving the county commissioners a chance to handpick the county’s Tax-Assessor Collector. Many Texas politicians think that Bettencourt’s resignation was either planned months ahead of time or enacted after he’d been named in a Federal Civil Rights Lawsuit. The Harris County Democratic Party is suing Bettencourt over allegations that he disenfranchised voters. For those that didn’t pay attention in government class, in Texas the county Tax-Assessor Collector is also the county vote registrar. Bettencourt is accused of failing to process 13,000 voter registration cards before election day as well as unfairly and unjustly disqualifying many of the cards his office did process for “mistakes.”

-Alex

Worst local public servant scandal
CHUCK ROSENTHAL
He sent his secretary an e-mail about ‘toys’ from his work address? Come on man, what were you thinking? Everyone knows that if you set up an anonymous e-mail account, make sure it isn’t named HoustonDA@yahoo.com. Jesus, didn’t you learn anything from prosecuting all those criminals?

-Alex

Worst weather reporting of the year
FEBRUARY COLD FRONT
Wall to wall coverage of a winter freeze. 24-hour-news coverage of falling temperatures. Reporters watching ice melt. It was 30 degrees and TV news treated it like it was the end of the world.

-Alex

Worst Dancers
HOUSTONIAN CONCERT GOERS WHO THINK IT’S COOL TO JUST STAND THERE
I feel really sorry for the bands that bust their asses to come up with great tunes to rock your bod while you just stand there with hands in too tight jean pockets and look miserable. That’s what I look like when I’m waiting to get my registration renewed. If the band sucks that’s one thing, but if I like them I’m going to dance and you will join

me or I will call you out on it. Like I just did. Resolution for 2009: To make Houston known for it’s booty shakin’ grin’in’, whinin’, live show audiences...now is that too much to ask? It’s not like I’m asking you to recycle.

-Commandrea

Worst/Scariest local commercial
BROWN HAND CENTER
It’s not enough that the owner of the Hand Center left his wife to remarry a younger faker wife, but he had to edit the commercial to show this new family. The worst part though is the final line of the commercial delivered by his daughter in a voice that sounds like it was ripped from an old seventies horror film, “Daddy’s ba-by giiiiirrl”... freaky shit.

-Tiffany Ferguson

Worst Hipster Fashion Trend
KEFFIYEH
My first inclination upon seeing hipsters wearing the symbol of Arab, and notably Palestinian, resistance was to rip them off their necks and replace them with the Vulcan death grip. But after thinking about it for awhile I decided, maybe us Arab folk should allow it under one condition: We may one day call on you to ‘do us a favor’ and help us in our next big attack. What a small price to pay for a little ‘terrorist chic’ accessorizing? So listen up college aged white people who are not familiar with the Palestinian plight: If your not willing to strap plastique to your chest for the cause or can’t spell P-L-O, then don’t wear the keffiyeh.

-Omar Afra

Worst TxDot project
CRAWFORD ELYSIAN VIADUCT
The existing plan to convert the Crawford Elysian Viaduct into a so called parkway on the ground like Memorial Drive-- yeah, sure! No really, the plan is pushing for a worst result-- to rebuild a bridge that is not used much and make that a connection for the Hardy Toll Road even though the Toll roadway extension into the near I-10 area already has a ramp connecting to US59...so let’s waste some money. Why rebuild an old funky mile long viaduct which already functions fine as an elevated? It carries one via a lovely ride over the old industrial Fifth Ward and part of Second Ward and descends into town with a

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ONCE THE DOUCHE BAG GETS IN THE BAR, A RESOUNDING WHISPER IN THEIR HEAD SAYS, “YOU MADE IT. YOU’RE COOL NOW.”

cool view of the bayou and skyline.

TxDot: You guys suck and you’re way out of money. Try something new like preservation and conservation. Perhaps an honest respect for archeology would be a good new program for you guys. What a waste of our real resources.

-Mr. Anonymous

Worst Song and Dance request for money
MY CAR IS OUT OF GAS
“Look man, My car is outta gas. My wife and kids are stuck down the block. I just need 5 bucks to get to Texas City. If you write down your address I will send you the money back.”

-Omar Afra

Worst Houston Resident
THE DOUCHE BAG
Ungodly amounts of hair gel/product, expensive bottle service and bouncers helping them feel important marks the territory of the worst kind of Houston resident- the Douche Bag. They are most often male these Douche Bags, but the girls that consider them cool or attractive are just as depraved.

Douche Bags are merely weekend warriors when it comes to drinking. They save up all of their money during the week so they can spend it on one giant bottle of Grey Goose at one bar on Friday or Saturday night. So naturally, Douche Bags are shitty drinkers. They get drunk fast but due to the fact that their vocabulary is infinitesimal (a word not included in the Douche Bag dictionary) you really can’t tell how drunk they are. They just keep yelling things like: “Jager Bomb” and “Pomade” and “Oh my God! My collar!” At the end of the night they drive (drunk) themselves and the rest of their Douche Baggage back to their apartment or house located safely (for us) outside the Beltway.

My assumption is that Douche Baggery started somewhere in the vain city of Los Angeles. The lifestyle was somehow popularized on television and began to drift eastward. The entire city of Dallas is a Douche Bag. So, if you are from Dallas then you are a Douche Bag. You can never be too explanatory about these things.

Douche Bags do not live lavishly in their day to day life. Not at all. We’re talking about a hybrid of the \$30k Millionaire. Douche Bags spend their days in Accounts Payable or putting up aluminum siding on something. Sometimes they peddle insurance or real estate. But by all accounts, they are average people (in fact, they’re the reason why we have the word “average”), which is why they have an undying need to feel important or elevated. Enter the reason why we have Douche Bag Bars.

Mostly located in Midtown and Washington Ave, these bars have the easiest job in the world: make the Idiot feel like a Jedi. This is accomplished by having long

lines of Douche Bags waiting outside to get in. Once the Douche Bag gets in the bar, a resounding whisper in their head says, “You made it. You’re cool now.” Couple that with the VIP feeling that bottle service provides and you’ve got yourself a bar full of morons. Like I said, it’s the easiest business in the world. The Douche Bag ego is constantly treading on thin ice, so any little bit helps. For example, when the bouncer at the door says, “Hey man, cool shirt with a dragon on it,” he’s not saying that your shirt is cool. He’s merely suggesting that he has the same poor taste in clothes.

The Douche Bag is why we used to be the nation leading in the advancement of technology but now work on mastering ways to give you a suntan. The Douche Bag lives well beyond his means and is a direct contributor to inflation and the credit crunch. The Douche Bag goes to Rockets games and, instead of cheering in their seat, hangs out in the Lexus Lounge and watches the game on TV. They are poor in the brain. They are poor in the pocket. And if they had one, they’d be poor in the soul.

That’s right. I said it. Douche Bags have no soul. Their life is in pursuit of what’s popular on television. You know what should be popular on television? Suicide. Cheers.

Honorable Mention: The Katy Transplant- aka the Illiterate Douche Bag

-Mills-McCoin

Worst Predicament
UNEMPLOYMENT
It wasn’t always like this. I remember mornings spent mixing and matching the same three suits to make my wardrobe appear more extensive, avoiding coffee stains in transit to my office, cleaning coffee stains with the back of my tie on the elevator up my floor. Times were good. I had a job.

I moved to Houston this August in hopes of finding gainful employment in the city in which I grew up. The job well had all but dried in New York City and it was time to take my attentions elsewhere. In an article released this summer by BusinessWeek’s Proshant Gopal analyzing the top job markets for major cities across the United States, Houston invariably topped most lists of highest average income (cost of living adjusted) for a multitude of skill positions. My metropolis built on mud and magnolia was purported to be relatively insulated from the disastrous economy and subsequent horrendous job market affecting the rest of the country. I gave up pretzels on the subways for tacos on the corner. Surely my triumphant homecoming would result in a work place of my choosing. Call it youthful naivety, but at twenty-six and walking on the sunshine of my recent foray into the working world, I considered my new, swampy world my oyster.

In the last two months I have applied to over twenty jobs, ranging everywhere from

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assistant curator of a speaking forum to assistant editor of the very periodical you're reading. Keep in mind the word "assistant;" I have no illusions of grandeur and, having little experience in the realm of publishing, know I must start from the bottom. To provide some background, I am a fairly recent college graduate (3.79 GPA in English in case any of the faceless multitudes of human resource workers are reading- always network!) and am fairly adept with the written word. While I have worked in a law office, the hospitality industry, a surgery center, etc. I have no real practice in the literary business. The horrible catch-22 of finding employment in an industry like publishing, though this obviously applies to many other markets, is that you need experience to gain experience. While nothing new, this paradox certainly does make itself more apparent every time the dreaded "2-3 Years Experience Preferred" demand rears its ugly head in the majority of employment posts I've stomached every day for eight weeks. I apply anyway, though I feel like I'm auditioning to be a crewman on the Titanic.

I've heard more than one mention of my generation as having been brought up in "The Age of Entitlement." Those mentioning this ubiquitous line are usually of Baby Boomer ilk, murmuring admonitions about the cur-

rent state of spoiled youth and our inability to earn a living. However, I'd like to point out in deference to my generation this can only be a distant echo of what our parents' parents must have thought about an age characterized by droves of longhaired flower children, sit-ins, and free love. Also, we are only the product of our environment. One can't help but hate the parents, the enablers of entitlement, on shows like MTV's "Sweet Sixteen." There is no surer sign of the apocalypse than a girl with braces crying that her convertible is the wrong color.

But I digress. Rather than dealing with the "why?" behind America's current state of affairs in the job market sector, I'm more concerned with the "what's next?" Two of my closest friends were recently laid off. One is now addicted to youtube and the other spends his nights out so the days can be slept away (there is no small connection between the current hiring environment and the recent stock surge in Anheuser-Busch). Trying to find a new job leaves one with a lot of time on his hands and finding filler can be difficult, especially when the temperature drops below t-shirt weather. I suggest joining a gym. A new, healthy body can counter the insecurities of moving back into your parents' house.

It wouldn't be so bad if I at least heard

back from these potential employers. Even a simple response, a modicum of civility acknowledging the application process, would be acceptable. I could even handle an "LOL" reply to my resume from the Human Resource department of X Periodical. Hey, they recognized I tried.

And is there anything more miserable, more humiliating, than writing the dreaded Cover Letter? The rhetoric of these letters lies somewhere in the gray area between used car salesman and pompous bore. I find myself again and again pandering hopelessly to a faceless but omnipotent entity. Headhunting organizations and job search firms across the country teach applicants to use "buzz" words and phrases like "enthusiasm" and "ideal skill set." How mind-bogglingly tedious it must be for workers in the hiring department to sit through page after page of the same self-aggrandizing tripe. This process is made even more daunting by the fact that the competition for employment has never been fiercer. It's like I'm being interviewed, along with around one hundred other potential and much better looking suitors, by a new girlfriend's parents and they have a portfolio of all my previous relationships. Oh, and I'm naked.

On the other hand, perhaps there has never been a better time to be unem-

ployed. For starters, people don't seem that baffled when you explain why you're wearing pajamas in Central Market at four in the afternoon. Everywhere you look companies are tightening up and cutting jobs. Even the company Christmas party, that time honored tradition of uncomfortable speeches and attempting to appear sober, is on the decline. Who wouldn't prefer a day off rather than experience the awkwardness of ludicrous small talk with coworkers in a fabricated social environment? Also when your friends lose their jobs you'll have someone to commiserate with over a round of golf. And when you can't afford that, you can make a fort with your resume rewrites.

But I'll keep plugging away. My savings are all but gone and I haven't eaten this much Ramen since college, but my will is strong. I want to work and haven't given up hope yet. I'm not sure exactly how much longer I will be able to maintain a lifestyle of no income and exorbitant Kinko's fees, but there are always other options on the table. In the words of my grandfather, "The world needs ditch diggers too." I just hope they're hiring.

-Steve Thompson
FPH

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Climbing Poetree

by Stefan: HIMC covered the stop of climbing poetree’s (<http://www.climbingpoetree.com/live/>) hurricane season tour (<http://www.hurricanesseasontour.com/live/>) in Houston. I found it was a revealing report in two means. On the one hand the contents were awesome, but on the other it reflected the importance of HIMC as an independent source of information. The tour’s very beginning evolved within the discrepancy between the reporting mode of the mainstream media about hurricane Katrina and real life stories. That triggered the two women activism of climbing poetree. An apparently natural disaster turned out to be a human made and unnatural disaster. Art became both an organizing tool and a political weapon. The collective multimedia approach of climbing poetree merges news photos, interviews, music and poetry in order to start radical change in the audience’s heads. Straight from the beginning the recipients are respected as actors, their individual journeys are involved by bringing water to the stage when entering the show. The collectively gathered water remains an echoing part of the show. Water evolves as the crucial symbol in the show. It is cascading by being deconstructed and reconstructed. The metamorphosis of the water metaphor is used to enforce change for good. Further elements of the show are called Stitches and Solution Cycle. The later is like a networking platform for local activists within the show. Sorry to say it didn’t happen in Houston. Stitches are a thoughtful translation of the water metaphor into action. Ideas and best practices within the audience are collected on pieces of fabric in the intermission of the show. Afterwards they are stitched together and displayed in front of the next stop’s location, mysteriously moved by the wind. The project Stitches parallels the Idea of Indymedia’s open publishing and audience involvement on an artistic level: Don’t hate the media, be the media. Listen to an excerpt of the show at houston.indymedia.org/news/2008/11/65693.php - and get involved!



Nick’s pick for photo of the year: Gloria Rubac’s photo on Aug. 8 of Heliberto’s mom Mirna Chi & cousin Edgar Chi who witnessed his execution. International law that guarantees someone arrested in a foreign country the right to see a representative of their country or origin. His cousin Edgardo witnessed his execution, along with representatives of the Honduran Embassy and the Honduran Consulate. Edgardo waved at the family as he crossed the street to enter the death house.

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Grassroots Media Tour

yy Courtney: The Grassroots Media Tour and Convergence was held in Houston TX on Oct 19th 2008 with the goals to first, to focus on states in the South that do not get much media coverage and representation and second, to encourage all of us to not rely on corporate media groups to hear or see the things we want from the media. We can all create our own media. The day started out with a workshop for local independent media groups. A media group map was created for the public to see who does what media in the community and the type of media they do, as well as what areas of media need more involvement. The night opened with a short education by Rob for everyone present on how to use the Indy Media site. The first presenter, Brian from T.E.J.A.S showed how, with a laminated card from Pacifica Radio he was able to get onto Galveston Island after hurricane Ike when the residents were still restricted. Brian stressed that, “Calling ourselves media gives us powers.” Next was Hadassah Hill of Spread magazine, she talked about how "Spitzer-gate" brought intense focus on sex workers. Suddenly Fox and CNN were calling their magazine looking to talk to a high priced call girl. A "Sex Workers 101" reference page taking a first step towards teaching the mainstream media how to speak with respect about the people who make their living in the industry. Jordan Flaherty of Left Turn magazine showed some of the power in You Tube, by screening videos by 2cent Productions out of New Orleans. One video by 2cent productions showed a social action the group made to raise awareness to the fact that tourist who pay money to see the destruction in New Orleans are looking at real peoples lives. Another video was made by a group of roommates in an apartment under siege in Beirut called "From Beirut... to those who love us". It was written with a tragic but tough awareness that "the world is watching" the bombing by Israel. DJ Zin of SOS Radio, which airs on the Pacifica network (Wednesdays 3-5 on 90.1) pointed to the real key: PROMOTION. If we’re just reading each other’s magazines and they aren’t getting distributed, it doesn’t move our movements. Jesse Mohammad of Final Call talked about the ground-level organizing around the Jena 6 that began long before any major public figure was involved. The grassroots organization around made it too big of a story to ignore. He went on to describe a recent and terrible incident, the dragging death of Brandon McClelland in Paris, TX. Again, the early coverage by grassroots movements forced the mainstream media to cover a story they thought they could sweep under the rug by focusing solely on hurricane Ike. He cautioned, "This is nothing to play with. Information is warfare, don't let success go to your head and don't fear failure."



SWU- Summary of Coverage

by John: As 2008 comes to an end, HIMC covered a number of stories that were timely, unique, and crucial for getting the news out, when no one else was covering particular stories. For me, one of the best stories we featured was the coverage of the 20th anniversary celebration of the Southwest Workers Union, in San Antonio, Texas, the weekend of the 5th and 6th of December. The Southwest Workers Union(SWU) is a membership, community based, independent union, representing public school workers, from a number of school districts in the San Antonio area. With 3000 members, the SWU has been in the forefront of grassroots struggles, not only in San Antonio, but nationally. Folks from the SWU organized the first ever border forum in 2007, that was held in Ciudad Juarez. The SWU was also very much involved in the organizing and planning of the recent US Social Forum. In all the work that SWU undertakes, it is consistently, raising the issue of globalization and unity with other grassroots organizations. At the 20th anniversary celebration, representatives from grassroots organizations across the country, as well as from Puerto Rico and Mexico, were on hand, to express solidarity and congratulations for 20 years of grassroots struggle.

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MUNTADAR AL-ZAIDI DID What We Journalists Should Have Done Long Ago

By Dave Lindorff

WHEN IRAQI JOURNALIST MUNTADAR AL-ZAIDI HEAVED HIS TWO SHOES AT THE HEAD OF PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE IN BAGHDAD, HE DID SOMETHING THAT THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS CORPS SHOULD HAVE DONE YEARS AGO.

AL-ZAIDI LISTENED TO BUSH BLATHER that the half-decade of war he had initiated with the illegal invasion of Iraq had been “necessary for US security, Iraqi stability (sic) and world peace” and something just snapped. The television correspondent, who had been kidnapped and held for a while last year by Shiite militants, pulled off a shoe and threw it at Bush—a serious insult in Iraqi culture—and shouted “This is a farewell kiss, you dog!” When the first shoe missed its target, he grabbed a second shoe and heaved it too, causing the president to duck a second time as al-Zaidi shouted, “This is from the widows, the orphans, and those who were killed in Iraq!”

I’ll admit, listening to Bush lie his way through eight years of press conferences, while pre-selected reporters played along and pretended to get his attention so they could ask questions which had been submitted and vetted in advance, I have felt like throwing my shoes at the television set.

Al-Zaidi, who paid for his courageous act of protest by being brutally beaten by security guards, is a hero of the profession. He stopped taking the president’s BS and called him what he is: a murderer and a criminal, with the blood of perhaps upwards

of a million Iraqis on his hands. Al-Zaidi used what was supposed to be a staged photo-op for the president as an opportunity to speak up for those whose lives have been ruined by this president—the ones our suck-up journalists routinely ignore.

I’m not suggesting that journalists should routinely leave presidential press conferences in their stocking feet. We have different ways of expressing our sentiments to people we feel have insulted our intelligence than throwing shoes at them, but it would be nice to see a journalist or two flip the president the bird when he lies so blatantly to them. Or they could all get up and just walk out, leaving him standing alone at the presidential lectern.

It’s time for the press corps to stop treating presidents like royalty. If he accomplished anything at all in eight years in office, President Bush has demonstrated that, to the contrary, the president is a very ordinary—and in his case a rather less than ordinary—man. The office of president deserves no more respect than that of the mayor of Detroit, or of Wasilla.

My suggestion is that the press corps use the remaining five weeks of the Bush administration to develop a new relationship with the presidency—one in which they drop all the phony propriety and tradition and start acting like boisterous newshounds of old, barking questions, laughing cruelly at inane answers, demanding follow-ups when they are given the run-around, and, where

necessary, walking out, or perhaps tossing the occasional shoe.

The journalism profession was a full-blown disaster and an utter disgrace during the Bush administration, and with all the crises facing the country and the world, in part because of that failure on their part, we cannot afford to have them continue that failure into the Obama administration.

With the Bush administration reduced to a running joke at this point, it gives the journalism profession a chance to redeem itself by using these few remaining weeks to establish a new tradition for presidential press conferences and photo-ops—one that can continue on into the new presidency.

Meanwhile, I’m suggesting that my alma mater, the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, hire al-Zaidi to teach a class in press conference journalism techniques. They should make it a multi-year appointment, because if he left after just one year, his would be difficult shoes to fill.

FFH

NOTE: Speaking of shoes and the White House, Skip Mendler of Honesdale, PA has a great idea. He suggests that everyone who is disgusted with the outgoing Bush/Cheney administration send a shoe to the White House. Just imagine a pile up of a million smelly old running shoes in the White House mailroom! I think he’s got something. Spread the word!

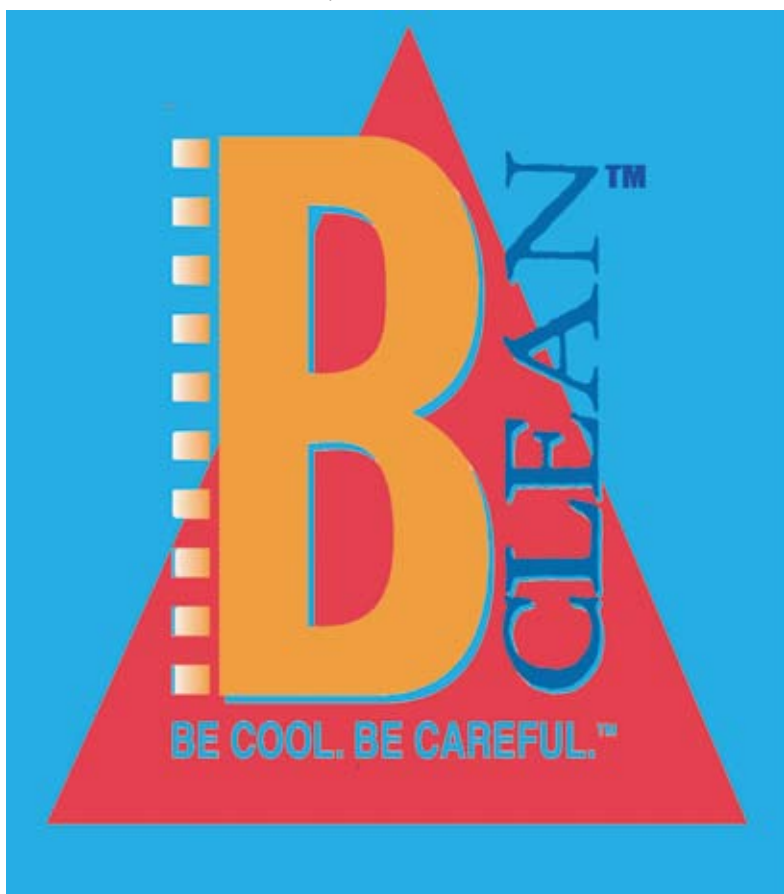


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